

PEOPLE & THINGS

By ATTICUS

COMING to London next week-end is Mr. George Kennan, regarded by many Americans and by most British diplomats as the ablest ambassador the American Foreign Service has produced during the last quarter of a century.

Mr. Kennan, who has parted with the State Department, has been engaged for some time on a history of the Brest-Litovsk Treaty and the early relations between the United States and the Bolsheviks. The purpose of his visit to London is to consult the few remaining British experts and eye-witnesses of the Revolution.

Mr. Kennan attended the recent Congress of Cultural Freedom in Milan. As regards the problem of Soviet Russia, there was a large measure of agreement on two points. First, there is a real change inside the Soviet Union. Secondly, there is no change in the essential aims of Communism.

The conclusion with which I understand Mr. Kennan is in general agreement, is that, on the principle that more flies are caught by honey than by vinegar, this new phase will be more dangerous to the West than the worst asperities of the Stalin era.

Straight the Path

MR. WHITNEY STRAIGHT'S career in aviation from the nursery to the summit of Rolls-Royce is an example of a man who knew what he wanted and never deviated from the path.

From the age of five Whitney Straight was single-minded about aviation. He took his first solo flight when he was sixteen and, having flown most types of the world's aeroplanes since then, is just as excited by flying today.

And he has personally explored every aspect of aviation. In 1934, for instance, he founded the first chain of commercial airfields in England. "They were packed with airfields." As he puts it, "We supplied everything from the ground you came down on to the man who waved you goodbye." Ramsgate was the first, followed by Ipswich, Exeter, Weston-super-Mare and Inverness and when the war came they were vital to the country.

No Horizons

WHITNEY STRAIGHT then founded his own airline—a modest little service (but with fifty-eight flights a day at its peak) from Weston-super-Mare to Cardiff. "The economy of an airline," he says, "depends entirely upon the vehicle you use. Nothing else matters. In the old days of B.O.A.C. it was like running a bus service with tanks. Now we have an aircraft with the same number of engines and much the same crew, but capable of carrying four and a half times the load. We have better vehicles."

Sponsor of the popular Miles Whitney Straight light aircraft, a brilliant fighter pilot during the war and hero of one of the great escapes through France and across the Pyrenees, Whitney Straight, at the age of forty-two, is only half-way through his aviation career. From now on, no horizons are beyond his reach.

Glass of Fashion

THIS week's exhibition of Steuben glass at No. 45, Park Lane is remarkable not only for the quality of the objects (many of which have been decorated by artists such as Matisse, Cocteau, Eustein, Sutherland, Piper and

Lucian Freud) but as an expression of the personality of Mr. Arthur A. Houghton, Jnr., who founded Steuben glass and is, by any standard, a prodigious and many-sided human being.

The great-grandson of a Massachusetts glass-maker, Mr. Houghton inherited, at the age of twenty-two, a large share in the family firm. After three years in the blowing-room he laid before his fellow-directors a plan for making "the finest glass the world has ever seen"; and this, by and large, is what he has done.

But glass is only one of his interests. He owns, among other things, part of the manuscript of Boswell's Life of Johnson, a Gutenberg Bible, and the finest herd of Aberdeen Angus cattle outside of Scotland, and, as an example of his far-flung activities, not so long ago he cabled from New York the correct solution of THE SUNDAY TIMES Crossword and won first prize.



Eton and "The Yard"

THE quiet room that looks out on the canyon of New Scotland Yard has little, at first sight, to connect it with the office of Assistant Commissioner (Crime). The glass-fronted bookcase, watercolour views of India, heavy silver cigarette-box, jewel-handled Malayan daggers, more-than-usually-good family portraits, and orderly leather-topped desk suggest the study of an eminent antiquarian rather than the room from which London's Criminal Investigation Department is controlled by its present chief, Mr. R. L. Jackson.

But Mr. Jackson is full of surprises. Educated at Eton where he was a member of Pop and Captain of his House) and Trinity, Cambridge (where he got his Blue as a heavyweight boxer), he came to the C.I.D. by way of the criminal Bar and the Public Prosecutor's Office. Forthright and forthcoming, and as massive as he is agile, he is not a man to be in wrong with.

A Poor Lot

MR. JACKSON'S combination of leadership and intelligence with high spirits have made him a popular general of the only other Government Department, besides the Secret Service, that is permanently at war, and the general verdict in the underworld is that it has been bad luck for Soho to get itself so thoroughly into the lime-light while he was in command. And English criminals know that part of Mr. Jackson's strength lies in his disdain for them.

"They're a poor lot," he said to me. "Only out for themselves and

colossally vain. Look at the idiotic way they advertise themselves—pictures in the papers and autographies and all that. They just can't hold their corn."

Weren't there some master minds, I inquired, some educated brains directing the gangs from comfortable chambers in St. James's Street?

Mr. Jackson said no, unequivocally, and his deputy, Mr. George Hatherill, added: "Chaps who've been to public schools and all that just haven't got the brains to be criminals."

Enough to catch them perhaps.

Good Samaritan

MR. BENJAMIN ASTBURY is a mild and self-effacing Christian who has devoted his whole life to social service—to unostentatious but unremitting efforts to help and comfort his fellows, and on Thursday he addressed the Family Welfare Association to mark the twenty-fifth year of his connection with this admirable organisation.

Mr. Astbury reviewed the changing social problems with which the Association has had to grapple: the Depression, the bogus charities whose sponsors abused public generosity in the early 1930s, the plight of the homeless during the war years, the subsequent disruption of family life and difficulties of readjustment among ex-Service men.

And Mr. Astbury spoke of the prevailing "insecurity of mind" of today. Social security has not brought freedom from anxiety. On the contrary, many are chary of saving for the future or of embarking upon any long-term enterprise, feeling that they have inadequate control over their own destinies to plan far ahead.

Inflation and the atomic age cast shadows which even the Astburys of this world cannot disperse.

Two Old Men

SENATOR THEODORE GREEN, S who celebrated his eighty-eighth birthday last week, told reporters that the secret of his long life was "Do just as you please."

This reminds me of the eager journalist in the train who found himself opposite a doddering old gentleman whose ravaged countenance yet retained a certain youthfulness.

Impetuously the journalist leaned forward. "Excuse me, sir, but I am a reporter and I wonder if you would care to give my readers the secret of your youthful appearance."

"Certainly," quavered the old man. "Riotous living. Since leaving school I have smoked like a chimney, drunk a bottle of champagne at every meal, and in my amours I have rivalled Casanova."

The journalist scented the story of a lifetime. "And would you tell me how old you are, sir?"

"With pleasure," said the old gentleman. "I am thirty-five."

His Master's Voice

A CHAUFFEUR-DRIVEN black Humber was hemmed in by Post Office vans outside the G.P.O. garage in Gough Street, W.C.

A Post Office worker took command.

"Right 'and down, Bill. Now back: Uvver lock; righto. Nah you, Charlie. 'Ard down, plenty of room. Whassa matter? Come on, Charlie, wike up!"

The solitary figure in the back of the Humber hastily put his newspaper down and spoke to his chauffeur and Postmaster-General Dr. Charles Hill, in the black car with the number GPO 1, went on his way.